



Brentwood Schools Christian Worker Trust Newsletter, Spring Term 2021

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BSCWT can be found both on Facebook and Twitter at:
www.facebook.com/BSCWT and www.twitter.com/BSCWT.



"Serving school communities by providing Christian learning and support"



Keep on Serving

The last year has been a 'rollercoaster' ride of rapid changes and significant difficulties for many people. As I write, we are preparing for the full re-opening of schools which brings with it another set of questions and challenges to overcome.

But, just as schools (and parents!) themselves have kept working hard to educate and support pupils, I am very grateful that the BSCWT team has also been able to continue serving our local schools by providing Christian learning and support. This term, some of our staff have been part-furloughed again, whilst home schooling their own children (and one of our Schools Workers, Rosie, is currently on maternity leave), but, with help from our volunteers, we have kept supplying 'assembly' videos to schools and providing pastoral support to pupils. With Easter approaching, we are also excited about delivering digital projects that will help pupils learn about what Christians believe in this important season. And, crucially, we have kept praying for our local schools in this time of great need.

I hope you enjoy reading, in this newsletter, about some of what we are doing. Thank you so much for your support to help us keep on serving schools.

Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work



Pray for Schools Fortnight

This year, Pray for Schools Fortnight is from Sunday 9th to Sunday 23rd May.

This is a great opportunity to focus on praying for our local schools, especially those pupils who are taking exams/assessments of various kinds. Although, for many, this will look very different this year, they will need our prayers just as much!

SCHOOLS WORK SUNDAY

Thank you very much to every person and every church which marked Schools Work Sunday in or around 7th February by watching our video and praying for Christian ministry to local schools. Next year, Schools Work Sunday will be on 6th February 2022.

Recent feedback from a teacher:

"Thank you very much for the assembly videos. We are really pleased to be able to use these. They are of a very high quality which gives them a lot of credibility."

Recent feedback from a teacher:

"Thanks for all your support this year, especially during this difficult term - the school community really appreciates it."

Recent feedback from a parent on our pupil support:

"It's good to know your work as a charity continues, supporting pupils from primary school into secondary school."



Some of our team online at Christmas

Recent feedback from a teacher:

"Thank you so much for another excellent video assembly. Your contributions are helping us reduce teacher workload during these difficult times and you are giving our students really thought-provoking input."

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Serving schools in lockdown...again!

Despite the current lockdown and the many difficulties faced so far this year, we are grateful to have been able to continue serving schools in various ways. These two pages contain some insights into how we are continuing to support schools and young people.

Remote Pupil Support



Last term, our Chaplains were able to provide face-to-face support to pupils. This term, with the schools being closed for most young people, we have had the privilege of supporting pupils 'remotely'. This is done in agreement with the schools, parents, and pupils. Support has been conducted via email or phone calls, in line with safeguarding protocols. It is good to be able to continue to support pupils who are struggling at this time and there have also been opportunities to provide support and a listening ear to parents too!

Fiona Mason, Administrator & Schools Worker

Bereavement Resources



Earlier this term, I received a request from a local primary school asking whether we had any specific bereavement resources, as they had several families who had suffered loss due to COVID-19. We had previously addressed issues like this in some of our groups, such as *Caterpillars* and *Butterflies*, but didn't have a specific document of resources that I could immediately share. So I did some research and put together a document of various resources (books, crafts, activity journals etc) that could be easily sent to, and accessed by, schools and parents alike and, hopefully, ease some of the burden on school staff in the process.

Holly Coleman, Schools Worker

'Rooted'

Last term, Sue and I led a small group called *Rooted* with some girls from Years 10 and 11 in a local school. This course covered issues such as identity, emotions, friendship, self-esteem, being healthy and being brave. It included some creative activities, such as self-portraits, Christmas craft, dancing, 'jars of joy' and friendship bracelets. The girls were fairly shy at the beginning, but gradually grew in confidence and communicated more freely as the course went on. A highlight of the course was the last session, where the girls got involved in a dance fitness workout, contributing their own dance moves and being willing to try new healthy snacks. We are hoping to run more small groups in the future, with other students.



Alison Carmichael, Schools Worker

'Christian Union....online!'

When wondering how to run a Christian Union in a local school when year groups can't be mixed, prayers were answered quickly! A student stepped forward to take over the leadership of the C.U. This student's gifts have been revealed as a delightful, inspiring surprise whereby he is speaking powerfully about the Bible and relating it to his peers via videos. He is also working through the challenges of running the C.U. remotely, with support from me, Fiona and school staff. And even in this new term, we are adapting again as we explore other ways to reach out to students such as a 'Scripture of the Week' and prayer activities students can try!



Frances Coe, Schools Worker

Headteacher: "The biggest issue we have faced? There are so many! We continue to interpret ever changing guidance, plan, react and constantly refine our practice. Through keeping in touch with families and offering support, we have a window into real hardship and heartbreak. Sometimes I wish that our critics could understand what we are trying so hard to do (for the wellbeing and academic progress of our students)."

Student: "It has been really hard to keep organised, have self-discipline and keep structure to the days. I often lack motivation and find being around my siblings can be very distracting and annoying!"



PRAYING FOR SCHOOLS

As we all know, the coronavirus pandemic has caused a great deal of strain and stress for many.

Schools have faced incredible pressure to adapt whilst continuing to provide education and care to students in a changing environment. A critical part of BSCWT's work is to keep praying for our local schools on issues such as the ones here, shared with us recently by a headteacher, a student, a parent and a teacher.

If you would like us to email you regular prayer updates, please sign up at <http://bit.ly/BSCWTconsent>.

Parent: "Juggling work, three children home-schooling and the other general responsibilities of life has been really hard! I have definitely been more stressed, really tired and constantly battling to find patience in dealing with everybody."

Teacher: "One of the biggest challenges we have been facing as teachers is adapting to a completely new way of teaching and providing lesson content in different formats. We are used to having classrooms full of students who are inspiring, enthusiastic and share wonderful ideas. It is challenging to try and create this same environment through online lessons and we have missed the 'busy' classroom as much as the students have."

Christmas Projects

As we approached Christmas last term, we didn't want to miss out on our regular contact with schools through our Christmas lessons with both infants and older juniors, so we adapted *Darkness to Light* and *Christmas Unwrapped* into digital packs of short films and worksheets which could be used in school or even at home. It was a rewarding challenge to reinvent and commit them to a kind of permanence they haven't had before, and we were able to send the lessons to the schools we usually visit as well as the other primary schools we have contact with across the Brentwood area.

Our staff and associate workers rose to the challenge of acting, dressing up, puppeteering, filming, editing and adapting these great lessons into wonderful digital resources! We've had some great feedback and we were pleased to be able to continue to support schools by way of providing these fun workshops for their pupils. Thank you to everyone who encouraged and helped and to all who are continuously praying for this work.

Sue Evans,
Schools Worker

www.bscwt.org/christmas-unwrapped / www.bscwt.org/darkness-to-light



'Assembly' Videos and Bible Story 'Bites'

One of the key ways in which we have been able to continue serving schools during the pandemic is by providing 'assembly' videos. These can be used with groups of pupils in school, shown in online class sessions or sent to be watched at home. This term, for primary schools, we have continued with our current series, exploring "Power to... Hope" and "Power to... Forgive".

We have also carried on providing more "Bible Story Bites", short simple videos telling a Bible story with a brief application/reflection.

For secondary schools this term, we are addressing themes including "Compassion" and "Easter". Most of our assembly videos can be found at www.bscwt.org/assemblies or on our YouTube Channel at www.bit.ly/BSCWTYouTube. We are thankful that, since last March, our 'assembly' videos have been watched over 2,500 times (many of these views will have been by whole classes).

Recent feedback from a teacher:
"I just wanted to say thank you, on behalf of our school staff, to all of the team at BSCWT for the effort you put into creating these assemblies."

Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work

All things technical...

In my previous career, I was involved in I.T., so it's been my absolute privilege to be able to support the technical side of BSCWT's work during this challenging time. Technology has been so important in keeping us connected as a team and enabling our work to reach the schools in a digital way.

I'm very grateful for the opportunities involved in uploading our videos to our YouTube channel, maintaining our website, posting social media announcements and supporting the team technologically.

Gelila Melaku, Project Administrator

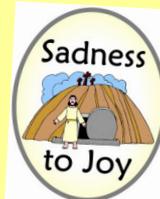


Do you shop online with Amazon?

If you do, you could be raising money for BSCWT at the same time with 'Amazon Smile'! Visit www.smile.amazon.co.uk, choose the Brentwood Schools Christian Worker Trust as your charity and Amazon will donate to BSCWT with every qualifying purchase you make. Thank you!

Easter Projects

As we all finished the last touches on our Christmas projects, we were already starting to think about Easter! Even with pupils back in school buildings, the situation with school outings and visitors will remain restricted. I think our Easter projects are even more important than the Christmas ones: most pupils have some idea about the first Christmas story but it is less so with Easter.



EASTER CRACKED



So, as I write this, the BSCWT team is putting our creative skills to work on transforming both *Easter Cracked* and *Sadness to Joy* into digital resource packs, complete with videos, workbooks and teachers' guides, to send to our local primary schools.

At a time when sharing the 'Good News' and the hope of the Easter story seems even more relevant than ever, our prayer is that the resources we create will not only be used well, but will really help school staff and pupils who access them.

Sue Evans, Schools Worker

Resources Webpage

As you might expect, the BSCWT website has been a relatively busy place in recent times. Amongst other things, we have been keeping our "Resources" page up to date with lots of links to relevant educational and mental health resources that we think will have been helpful to school staff, pupils and parents during the recent periods of lockdown and now with schools fully open again too.

You can find the page at www.bscwt.org/resources-2020-21.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR:



The struggle with the pandemic and the restrictions on our lives and liberties seem never-ending. However, since writing for the last newsletter, hope has entered the world in the shape of vaccines which offer the very real possibility of a return to something akin to normal.

Many have embraced this with joy, but some have not and this situation has reminded me of people's response to Christ.

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the hope and saviour of mankind, sent by God to rescue his fallen creation. However, this saving is not automatic but rather is extended to those who accept the message and put their faith in the Son. This is not forced on anyone and it is perfectly possible to reject the message, but in so doing, the consequences of this action must be subsequently faced.

The work of the Trust continues, as demonstrated by other reports in this newsletter, and the staff team is striving to maintain contact with schools, pupils, churches and other supporters to remain a beacon of light, radiating Christ, in this time of darkness. I wish you well, I urge you to grasp the hope and thank you for your continued partnership with the Trust.

God bless.

Kevin Gilderson, Chair of Trustees.

How can you be involved?

If you are a Christian with a passion for schools, education, children and young people, and think you might be interested in being involved, please get in touch with us at the BSCWT office. Please join with us to:

GIVE: BSCWT depends on the continued generosity of people who support us financially. If you'd like to support the work financially, please:

- Set up a standing order or a donation via your online banking. Please contact us for a Gift Aid Declaration form, if applicable (or download one from www.bscwt.org/downloads).
- Contact us for a standing order mandate (or download one from www.bscwt.org/downloads).
- Donate online at www.give.net or send a cheque to our office address (see front of newsletter).
- For on-line banking/standing orders, please contact the BSCWT office for our bank account details.

BSCWT is a Local Mission Partner of



Scripture Union

If you no longer wish to receive communications from BSCWT, please contact us via the office at office@bscwt.org to be removed from our circulations.

Finance Update from the Treasurers & Trustees

Dear friends and supporters, we are most grateful for your valued contribution, both in prayer and donations, to the ongoing work of the Trust in serving our local schools.

Despite a reduction in support, the following brief note of The Trust's receipts and payments shows that the accounts are still healthy. **Receipts**, to the end of

January 2021 were £88,841, including a budgeted transfer of £29,400 from unrestricted funds, and **Payments** were £79,443, leaving a net surplus of £9,398. Government support received from the Job Retention Scheme (JRS) was £6,370, thus maintaining the Trust's financial health and supporting furloughed staff. Recovery from HMRC of income tax on donations was £5,142.



Joe Nunn
Treasurer

We were recently advised of the successful outcome of our application to the Mulberry Trust for a further 3 year grant in support for BSCWT's pupil support work. Surely an answer to prayer!

If you do not "gift aid" your donations, and can do so - please ask the Trust office for a gift aid declaration form. Again, thank you for your prayerful and practical support. Please pray that, even with the continuing COVID-19 situation, we can still exercise the privilege we currently have of reaching out to our local schools.

Peter Embling & Joe Nunn, Joint Treasurers



Peter Embling
Treasurer

Feedback received from a supporter following Schools Work Sunday: "Such good reminders to keep all the BSCWT workers in our prayers - they are an amazing bunch. They and all the staff in countless schools are the largely unsung heroes of the pandemic".

PRAY: We believe praying for our local schools, children and young people is really important. Please contact us to:

- Request our weekly prayer email, termly prayer calendar and newsletter by email or post. Contact us at office@bscwt.org or 01277 249275 or visit <https://forms.gle/VUjcfbi1QhuSNvFP6>.
- Start a prayer group for schools in your church or start/join a prayer group for a particular school.
- Just pray — on your own or with others!

VOLUNTEER: There are over 40 people who give their time and energy to volunteer with BSCWT:

- Our **Associate Workers** volunteer with us in schools, working with children and young people.
- Our **Trustees** oversee the running of the Trust.
- Our **Support Teams** assist the Staff and Trustees by doing important tasks in areas such as prayer, finance, human resources, policy-writing, events, monitoring and publicity.
- Our **Church Reps** help us to liaise with our local churches.
- We are also open to applications from people interested in doing an internship or work experience with us.